

**WAYLAND BAPTIST UNIVERSITY**  
**Plainview Campus**

School of Languages and Literature **Note: This is a draft. The final syllabus may contain changes.**

**Wayland Baptist University Mission Statement:** Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

**Course Name:** ENGL 5307 VC01 -- Literary Theory

**Term and Year:** Winter 2016

**Name of Instructor:** Dr. Steven Michael

**Office Phone and WBU Email Address:** 806-291-1103 / [smichael@wbu.edu](mailto:smichael@wbu.edu) (I can best be reached by email)

**Office Hours, Building, and Location:** Gates Hall 206C Plainview Campus

**Office Hours:**

Monday: 7:30-8:00 • 10:00-1:00  
Tuesday: 8:55-9:25 • 12:15-1:15  
Wednesday: 7:30-8:00 • 10:00-1:00  
Thursday: 8:55-9:25 • 12:15-1:15  
Friday: 7:30-8:00

Office visits also by appointment;  
Hours subject to change. I can best be reached via email.  
I'm not in the office during holidays but am available by email.

**Class Meeting Time and Location:** online, through Blackboard

**Catalog Description:** A study of literary theory and criticism. Required of all MA in English students

**Prerequisite:** graduate standing

**Required Textbook and Resources:**

Required Textbooks:

Bressler, Charles E. *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice (A Second Printing)*. 5th ed., Longman, 2011. ISBN: 978-0205212149

Leitch, Vincent B., et al. *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. 2nd ed., Norton, 2010. ISBN: 978-0393932928

e-editions acceptable if available

Required Resources:

You will need a reliable and secure computer connection, as well as access to software capable of saving and reading documents in Microsoft Word .doc or .docx formats (Apple or other word processor formats not supported by Blackboard's inline grading feature may have compatibility issues); software capable of reading documents produced in .html and .pdf formats; backup media such as USB flash drive, recordable CDs, or some other external destination.

The course will take place entirely online. You must have a functional Blackboard account and be able to access the WBU library website, as well as articles and other material provided through proprietary databases available via the WBU library website. You also must have an active WBU email address, and you need to check it every day. Your WBU email address is the usual way that I will contact you. You are strongly encouraged to visit the Blackboard login page and [test your browser](#) for Blackboard compatibility, as well as take the [Blackboard Tutorial](#) if you are not familiar with how the service works. If you have problems with Blackboard or your WBU email, please use the WBU Support Contacts available on the Blackboard login page.

## Optional Materials:

Graduate students in English are strongly encouraged to acquire a copy of the *MLA Handbook*, 8<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Course Outcome Competencies:** Upon the conclusion of this course, students actively engaged in learning will be able to (1) discuss the characteristics of at least four general schools of literary theory; (2) differentiate among the various approaches to reading a literary text, including both old and new historicism, formalism, structuralism, semiotics, feminist theory, reader-response theory, and cultural materialism; (3) apply at least three reading strategies to a given literary text; (4) demonstrate comprehension of graduate-level scholarship with at least one theory in relation to a literary text; and (5) articulate this comprehension both orally (or in reasonably comparable online format) and in a research essay. The more the student puts into the course, the higher his or her outcome competencies will be.

**Attendance Requirements / Decorum and Makeup Policies:** Students are expected to participate in the class and demonstrate regular attendance. This applies without exception. Participation and attendance will be determined by timely completion of message board discussions and exercises. When a student shows a lack of participation/attendance considered by the instructor to be excessive, the instructor will so advise the student. Any student whose non-attendance/non-participation reaches 25 percent will receive a grade of F in the course. Students are required to have computer and Internet access for the course. Additional participation policies for each course, as defined by the instructor in the course syllabus, are considered a part of the University's attendance policy. Makeup opportunities usually will not be offered and will be considered only in extremely compelling situations. Any authorized makeups must be completed within the time limit set by the instructor; otherwise, the makeup grade will be zero. For additional information, see "Late Work and Incompletes" below.

**Statement on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** Wayland Baptist University observes a zero tolerance policy regarding academic dishonesty. Per university policy as described in the academic catalog, all cases of academic dishonesty will be reported and second offenses will result in suspension from the university.

**Disability Statement:** In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Coordinator of Counseling Services serves as the coordinator of students with a disability and should be contacted concerning accommodation requests at (806) 291- 3765. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS and GRADING CRITERIA:

Outcome competencies will be assessed in the following ways: exercises, Blackboard participation, short position papers, preparatory work for a research paper, a research paper, and a final examination. **You are expected to save your work to your hard drive in Microsoft Word format, then upload it to the appropriate assignment destination in Blackboard. If you use Apple Pages or some other non-Microsoft word processor, you will need to save or export your document as a Word file prior to submission. Online storage services, such as iCloud, sometimes have compatibility issues with Blackboard; therefore, avoid "sideloading" assignments directly from such services. If I can't load and read your submissions, I won't grade them. All written assignments must be submitted in electronic form through Blackboard on their due dates. Late work will be penalized 10 points per 24-hour period and will not be accepted after the third 24-hour period. The Research Paper, New Historicist Position Paper, and Optional Revision for one of your Position Papers (see below) will not be accepted after February 12.**

## Short Position Papers

Every time we discuss a new theory or reading strategy, we will consider the theory/strategy in relation to a primary literary text (usually a poem or short story). The Web addresses for these literary texts will be provided in your Schedule. For example, when we take up Formalism and New Criticism, you will need to read not only the assigned material in your textbooks but also John Keats's poem "Ode to a Nightingale."

When we come to a new theory or reading strategy, you will have an opportunity to write a brief (2 to 4 double-spaced typed pages) position paper in which you analyze the assigned primary text as if you were a member of the given theoretical school. For example, if we were using Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* as a primary text during our exploration of Formalism, you could locate certain terms or passages in an excerpt from the novel to show how Sterne practices "de-familiarization." If we were using John Donne's "The Canonization," you could (as Cleanth Brookes does) interpret the poem by examining its paradoxes and "tensions." Pretend to be from the school of theory. Avoid dwelling on the theory's limitations. Instead, show how it is the "right" way to read a text.

**You must write three position papers, and each paper must use a different theory/strategy.** However, it is up to you which three theories/strategies you use. For example, if you would rather not write a position paper about Formalism, you can wait until we get to Structuralism and write about that. Beware, though: You cannot wait until we get to Deconstruction and write about something we did earlier, such as Formalism. Once we have only three theories remaining to study, you must write about those remaining theories because you have only three paper opportunities left. Due dates will be specified on Blackboard, usually in the weekly Lesson folder.

Here is some good news. Even though you must read the primary literary texts I provide (because we will talk about them when we come to the various theories/strategies), you don't necessarily have to use them in your position papers. You may decide that a poem or story or excerpt from a novel that you've read elsewhere would work better for you. You also have considerable latitude in the way you use the primary literary texts. You may wish to use a different text for each theory, or you may prefer to use the same text for all three papers. You also have the option to use only part of a primary text instead of the whole thing. It's up to you. Once again, however, you are still responsible for reading the assigned texts. You may use outside sources if you wish, but none are required for the position paper assignments and I will not award extra points for using outside material.

There's even more good news. You can revise one of the position papers for an updated grade. This is optional. You don't have to do this if you're happy with the original grade. The revision, however, should be a real revision with 1 to 2 pages of new content. Merely inserting missing commas or performing other cosmetic editing will not be sufficient for a higher grade (and it's possible to write a worse paper than the original, so keep that in mind).

### **Preparatory Work for Research Paper**

(See Research Paper assignment below.) During Week 7, you will need to submit a document containing two things: (1) a prospectus of about one double-spaced page in length explaining what you plan to do in your research paper; (2) an annotated bibliography consisting of brief (about five sentences each) summaries of at least five secondary sources you intend to use in your research paper. The summaries should be written as complete paragraphs that present, objectively and in your own words, the thesis and supporting points of each of your secondary sources. Each summary should be headed by an MLA-formatted Works Cited entry. The entries/summaries should be arranged in alphabetical order by the source authors' last names. Additional details and a sample will be provided in advance of the due date. I will evaluate the clarity and focus of your prospectus, the appropriateness of your plan, the quality and balance of your source material, and how well you understand and present the theses and main points of your sources.

### **Research Paper**

From among the primary literary texts assigned in the Schedule, pick one that you haven't used before. Or pick a favorite text of your own you haven't written about. Use at least five secondary sources (quality books and journal articles), but also use at least one appropriate reading from *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. In your essay, discuss what kinds of reading strategies the secondary source authors are using in their discussions about the primary text; then use the Norton reading as a base for arguing that your strategy is superior or at least as good as the others. If a secondary author is using the same or a similar strategy, enlist him/her on your side. The Research Paper must meet the following requirements:

- **Length** -- 6 to 8 double-spaced typed pages (about 2400 to 3200 words)
- **Secondary Source Requirements** -- You must use at least 5 secondary sources. "Secondary" means sources that somehow comment on or clarify the issue you are discussing. These sources must come from somewhere other than your textbooks. The work you are writing about does not count as one of the secondary sources. **You must have at least two articles from academic journals. Do not use reviews or study aids (e.g., SparkNotes, Shmoop.com, GradeSaver.com, etc.) as sources.**
- **Norton Anthology Assigned Reading** -- You must use one of the assigned readings from the *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* as an anchoring influence for your application of a theory or reading strategy. Be sure that the author is using an appropriate theory.
- **Presentation of Evidence** -- You must cite and analyze evidence from your sources. The object of citation is not to "throw in" evidence but to use it and comment on it when you need to support one of your own points. Be sure to analyze quoted evidence from the primary text and the Norton assigned reading, not just your secondary sources.
- **Documentation** -- You must use MLA documentation style. See the *MLA Handbook*, 8th ed., or the following website, for assistance:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

**How I Will Grade** -- The essay will be evaluated in light of the following criteria: (1) control and responsible development of discussion; (2) presentation of evidence from the primary text and Norton reading as well as from secondary sources (let me know that you understand how to use summary, paraphrase, and quotation properly); (3) analysis of, and ability to draw conclusions from, this evidence; (4) clarity and polish of writing; (5) proper use of MLA documentation style.

The Research Paper must be submitted no later than February 12 and will not be accepted after that date. Students are at all times responsible for their materials and are required to keep copies of their work in progress. Please see me if you need assistance or clarification.

### Exercises

As often as every week, you will be required to complete exercises that have a bearing on various topics. These are hands-on activities intended to strengthen your understanding of the material discussed in the course. The requirements of each exercise will be gone over in the weekly Lesson folders on Blackboard.

### Blackboard Participation

Each week, I will present at least one topic for discussion on the Blackboard forum for this course. You are expected to participate helpfully and meaningfully in each discussion. You may be asked to read outside articles in preparation for these discussions. Please be sure that you can access the proprietary databases, such as JSTOR, in the "Articles & Databases" area of the WBU library website in order to view these articles.

### Final Exam

The final exam will be in essay-question (and perhaps short-answer) form and will be evaluated according to the following criteria: (1) how well you know the content of the reading assignments, lectures, discussions, and any pertinent supplementary material; and (2) how well you organize, develop, and express your thoughts. The exam will be comprehensive, and there will be no makeup for it. Students are expected to arrange well in advance to take the final exam at the officially scheduled time (see the schedule for this class). You will not need a proctor.

**Grading / Help:** (See Grade Distribution table below.) My grading scale is as follows: 90-92/A-, 93-97/A, 98-100/A+; 80-82/B-, 83-87/B, 88-89/B+, and so forth. Anything below 60 is an F. Weighted grades are averaged according to a 100-point scale and are totaled at the end of the semester. If your total is 79.49, your course grade is a C. If your total is 79.50, your course grade is a B. I am always pleased to talk with you about your progress in the course, any difficulties or victories, or any thoughts you may have about literature and life in general.

### Grade Distribution (how much grades count):

Assignment	% of Course Grade	Assignment	% of Course Grade
Blackboard Participation	5%	Preparatory Work for Research Paper	5%
Exercise Average	10%	Research Paper	25%
Position Papers	30% (10% each)	Final Exam	25%

**Note:** Completion of quizzes and taking part in discussion forum topics constitute attendance and participation in the course. If your failure to attend/participate reaches a threshold of 25%, your grade in the course will be an F (see "Attendance Requirements/Makeup Policies" above).

Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the Executive Vice President/Provost to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

**Late Work and Incompletes:** All work, including essays, message board responses, exercises, exams, and other activities, will have due dates. These due dates will be indicated in Lesson and Announcement notifications. Failure to complete quizzes or participate in discussion forum topics by their due dates will result in grades of 0/F. Failure to

submit major writing assignments on time will result in the reduction of your grade for that work by 10 points per 24-hour period following the due date. For example, if a writing assignment is due by 11:59 P.M. CST (Central Standard Time) on December 9, you will be counted off 10 points if I don't have your work by 11:59 P.M. CST on December 10. You will be counted off 20 points after 11:59 P.M. CST on December 11. After three late periods, the work will no longer be accepted. This policy applies without exception. Except in extremely compelling cases, no make-up opportunities for discussions or exercises will be offered. No make-up opportunities or extended time will be offered for the final research essay, the final exam, or the optional position paper revision. Make-up opportunities for lengthy absences (a week or longer) will not be offered except in extremely compelling cases (e.g., sudden hospital situations). You should not plan vacations or other extended absences during online courses. Military personnel who think they may have to be gone on extended TDY's should arrange for computer and internet access during that time. Grades of Incomplete (I) will not be considered. Please contact me early if you're having trouble getting something in so that I can assist you properly.

**Course Outline:** This offering of ENGL 5307 will begin with an overview of literary criticism, commencing with Plato's ideas about poetry and extending through Matthew Arnold's prescriptive and moral notions about canonicity. Thereafter, we will explore the ideas and influences of various splinter schools of literary theory, beginning with Russian Formalism and ending with the recent phenomenon known as "post-theory." Our objectives will be to (1) understand what literary criticism and theory are and how they differ, (2) track the chronological progression of critical and theoretical thought, (3) understand the reasoning behind important modes and paradigms related to the production and reading of imaginative literature, and (4) practice using these modes and paradigms in our own discussions. Through close reading, purposeful writing, and participation in online meetings, students will acquire a functional grounding in important milestones of literary theory. See "Schedule for ENGL 5307" in this syllabus for details and a calendar of daily topics / readings / assignments. *(NB: examples, ideas, opinions, and theories presented during class meetings do not necessarily reflect the views of the instructor. Furthermore, this syllabus is a plan. Although no significant changes are anticipated, the instructor may modify the plan during the course. The requirements of the course may be altered from those appearing in the syllabus. Finally, the plan contains criteria by which the student's progress and performance in the course will be measured. These criteria may also be changed.)*

The following is a working schedule and may be altered at the instructor's discretion, although significant departures are unlikely. Students will be notified of any changes. "Bressler" refers to the text *Literary Criticism: An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. "Norton" refers to *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*.

## SCHEDULE FOR ENGLISH 5307

### Week 1 - Nov 14 - Nov 20: Intro to Course • Criticism vs. Theory

- Assignment:
- Log in to Blackboard; test your browser; say hello on the Discussion Forum
  - Send me an email (a simple "hello") using your WBU email account
  - Complete Exercise 1
  - Required in Bressler, read pp. 1-47
  - Optional in Norton, browse Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Sidney, Wordsworth, Shelley, Arnold, Bakhtin
  - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion

### Week 2 - Nov 28 - Dec 4: Thanksgiving – Course resumes on Nov. 28 • Overview of Criticism

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 2
  - In Bressler, read chapter 3
  - In Norton, read Eichenbaum (pp. 925-51), Brooks (pp. 1217-29), and Wimsatt and Beardsley (pp. 1232-46 and 1255-57)
  - On Web, read John Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"
    - <http://www.bartleby.com/101/624.html>
    - <http://englishhistory.net/keats/poetry/odetoanightingale.html>
  - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion

**Week 3 - Dec 5 - Dec 11:** Formalism and New Criticism

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 3
  - In Bressler, read chapter 4
  - In Norton, read Iser (pp. 1524-32) and Fish (pp. 1974-92)
  - On Web, read Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery"
    - <https://americanliterature.com/author/shirley-jackson/short-story/the-lottery>
    - [https://sites.middlebury.edu/individualandthesociety/files/2010/09/jackson\\_lottery.pdf](https://sites.middlebury.edu/individualandthesociety/files/2010/09/jackson_lottery.pdf)
  - Consider Writing Formalist or New Criticism Position Paper on Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale"
  - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion

**Week 4 - Dec 12 - Dec 17:** Reader-Response • Due: Formalist or New Criticism Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 4
  - In Bressler, read pp. 85-105
  - In Norton, read Saussure (pp. 850-66) and Todorov (pp. 2023-30)
  - On Web, read Alexander Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle 1
    - <http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174165>
    - <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/2428/2428-h/2428-h.htm>
  - Consider Writing Reader-Response Position Paper on Jackson's "The Lottery"
  - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion

**Week 5 - Jan 3 - Jan 8:** Christmas Break - Course resumes on Jan. 3 • Structuralism • Due: Reader-Response Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 5
  - In Bressler, read pp. pp. 105-22
  - In Norton, read de Man (pp. 1365-78) and Derrida (1688-97)
  - On Web, read Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal"
    - <http://grammar.about.com/od/60essays/a/modpropoessay.htm>
    - <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1080/1080-h/1080-h.htm>
  - Consider Writing Structuralist Position Paper on Pope's *Essay on Man*, Epistle 1
  - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
  - Work on Research Paper

**Week 6 - Jan 9 - Jan 15:** Post-Structuralism and Deconstruction • Due: Structuralist Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 6
  - In Bressler, read chapter 7
  - In Norton, read Woolf (pp. 896-905) and Gilbert and Gubar (pp. 1926-38)
  - On Web, read Amy Lowell's "Patterns"
    - [http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/amy\\_lowell/poems/19955](http://famouspoetsandpoems.com/poets/amy_lowell/poems/19955)
    - [http://womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/poem1/blp\\_lowell\\_amy\\_patterns.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/poem1/blp_lowell_amy_patterns.htm)
  - Consider Writing Deconstructionist Position Paper on Swift's "A Modest Proposal"
  - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
  - Work on Research Paper

**Week 7 - Jan 17 - Jan 22:** MLK Day on Jan. 16 - Course resumes on Jan 17 • Feminism • Due: Deconstructionist Position Paper • Preparatory Work for Research Paper Due

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 7
  - In Bressler, read chapter 8
  - In Norton, read Marx (pp. 651-63) and Williams (pp. 1423-37)
  - On Web, read James Joyce's "Araby"
    - <http://fiction.eserver.org/short/araby.html>
    - <http://www.mendele.com/WWD/WWDaraby.txt>
  - Consider Writing Feminist Position Paper on Lowell's "Patterns"
  - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
  - Work on Research Paper

**Week 8 - Jan 23 - Jan 29:** Marxism • Due: Feminist Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Complete Exercise 8
  - In Bressler, read chapter 9
  - In Norton, read White (pp. 1536-53) and Greenblatt (pp. 2150-61)
  - On Web, read John Donne's "The Dissolution"
    - <http://www.luminarium.org/sevenlit/donne/donne2.php>
    - <http://www.netpoets.com/classic/poems/022007.htm>
    - Consider Writing Marxist Position Paper on Joyce's "Araby"
  - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
  - Work on Research Paper
  - Prepare for Final Exam

**Week 9- Jan 30 - Feb 5:** New Historicism • Due: Marxist Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Consider Writing New Historicist Position Paper on Donne's "The Dissolution"
  - Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
  - Work on Research Paper
  - Prepare for Final Exam

**Week 10 - Feb 6 - Feb 12:** Outlying Theories • "Post-Theory" • Research Paper Due • Due: New Historicist Position Paper • Due: Optional Revised Position Paper

- Assignment:
- Read any new material on Blackboard; participate in Blackboard forum discussion
  - Prepare for Final Exam

**Week 11 - Feb 13 - Feb 18:** Final Exam

### SUGGESTED READING

- Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary Cultural Theory*. Manchester UP, 2002.
- Bloom, Harold. *The Western Canon*. Macmillan, 1995.
- Eagleton, Terry. *Literary Theory: An Introduction*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Blackwell, 1996.
- Knellwolf, Christa, and Christopher Norris, editors. *Twentieth-Century Historical, Philosophical, and Psychological Perspectives*. Cambridge UP, 2006. *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism* 9.
- Lodge, David, and Nigel Wood, editors. *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Pearson-Longman, 1999.
- Richter, David H. *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., Bedford-St. Martin's, 2007.
- Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 5th ed., Pearson-Longman, 2005.

### SUGGESTED RESEARCH TOOLS

- *MLA International Bibliography* (available on-line through the LRC website; a fast way to find worthwhile scholarly studies; supplement with *ABELL*)
- *ABELL* (available on-line through the LRC website; a fast way to find worthwhile scholarly studies; supplement with *MLA International Bibliography*)
- *The Year's Work in English Studies* (a valuable annual review of criticism; summarizes important scholarly studies on an author and/or work and helps you to see context of recent debates and topics of interest; available online through the LRC website)
- *Essay and General Literature Index* (excellent source for studies included in edited collections; useful for supplementing all of the above; available online through the LRC website)
- Purdue OWL Literary Theory and Schools of Criticism:  
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/01/>
- See also Lynch's metapage on theory:  
<http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~jlynch/Lit/theory.html>